



Which reminds me. It's time for second breakfast already.



standuponit
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<https://standuponit.livejournal.com/2009-04-22> 09:42:00

MOOD: 😊 grateful

MUSIC: U2 - Bullet The Blue Sky

*Interesting blog summary of the Minnesota Starvation Study
(<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//junkfoodscience.blogspot.com/2008/02/how-weve-came-to-believe-that.html>). Could be pretty triggery reading for some. Here's Wikipedia's article on same, for context
(https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minnesota_Starvation_Experiment).

Please note, in 1944, *starvation* for an adult male was defined as somewhere in the range of *1600 to 1800 calories a day*, depending on the participant. How many modern diet books recommend that as a *maximum* intake?

Let me quote from the Wikipedia article.

Among the many conclusions from the study was the confirmation that prolonged semi-starvation produces significant increases in depression, hysteria and hypochondriasis as measured using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), a standardized test administered during the experimental period. Indeed, most of the subjects experienced periods of severe emotional distress and depression. There were extreme reactions to the psychological effects during the experiment including self-mutilation (one subject amputated three fingers of his hand with an axe, though the subject was unsure if he had done so intentionally or accidentally). Participants exhibited a preoccupation with food, both during the starvation period and the rehabilitation phase. Sexual interest was drastically reduced and the volunteers showed signs of social withdrawal and isolation. The participants reported a decline in concentration, comprehension and judgment capabilities, although the standardized tests administered showed no actual signs of diminished capacity. There were marked declines in physiological processes indicative of decreases in each subject's basal metabolic rate (the energy required by the body in a state of rest) and reflected in reduced body temperature, respiration and heart rate. Some of the subjects exhibited edema (swelling) in the extremities, presumably due to the massive quantities of water the participants consumed attempting to fill their stomachs during the starvation period.

What do we learn? We learn that being hungry makes you crazy and sick.

Thank you, William Anderson, Harold Blickenstaff, Wendell Burrous, Edward Cowles, George Ebeling, Carlyle Frederick, Jasper Gardner, Lester Glick, James Graham, Earl Heckman, Roscoe Hinkle, Max Kampelman, Sam Legg, Phillip Liljengren, Howard Lutz, Robert McCullagh, William McReynolds, Dan Miller, L. Wesley Miller, Richard Mundy, Daniel Peacock, James Plaughner, Woodrow Rainwater, Donald Sanders, Cedric (Henry) Scholberg, Charles Smith, William Stanton, Raymond Summers, Marshall Sutton, Kenneth Tuttle, Robert Villwock, William Wallace, Franklin Watkins, W. Earl Weygandt, Robert Wiloughby and Gerald Wilsnack.

*Blogger agenda warning, but it's one I mostly agree with, with the caveats that for those of us who *don't* have a healthy metabolism

things are a lot more complicated and I disagree with what appears to be her implied advocacy of processed food.

TAGS: [food](#)



This looks like a good idea.

...

This.

...

Little guy's not bad.

Gotta teach RHex to smear.

55 comments



 [fidelioscabinet](#)

[April 22 2009, 14:21:15 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I totally believe they were right about those being insufficient calorie levels at that point in time--how many of these men were doing farm work, or other physically-demanding work? And I do believe that most work, with the probable exception of office work, was more physically-demanding then than it is now.

My mother (who was born in 1916) and I were talking about diet and so forth when she was young, versus current habits and perceptions--Americans are (in general) so much more sedentary than we used to be--just the simple mechanics of keeing house required a higher level of activity, strength and stamina--so many of the appliances and conveniences we take for granted to day as a part of the landscape were either uncommon or non-existent. How many people didn't have cars, or had only one per family? Things like electric washers, mixers, vaccum cleaners--and so on and so forth. Clothes dryers? Try carrying several baskets of wet wash out and hanging them on a line, then taking them down and carrying them back inside the house. A lot of these things didn't use a squillion more calories individually, but added all together, they easily pushed your daily calories-used totals higher.

Then there's the effort involved in the workplace, especially in an industrial or agricultural context (and in the building trades), plus the effort needed to maintain body heat in a cold climate, when central heat was less common, and insulation less efficient.

A lot of us do burn a lot fewer calories, just in dealing with everyday life, than people did 65 years ago. That's a generalization, of course, but I do think there's a strong trend, mostly because of the increased mechanization of home and workplace, and a greater use of powered equipment. While I wouldn't recomend them as a regular diet, consider the calorie levels MREs provide, for people who are expected to operate at a fairly high exertional level--and yet people in the field are reporting losing weight on these things, because they are burning more calories than that.

It was harder work to get behind the mule and plow than driving a tractor is, and even now, driving a tractor burns more than driving a desk.



[standuponit](#)

[April 22 2009, 14:31:27 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

This is true. (I did say I disagreed with some of the blogger's agenda. Just not the self-acceptance and sane eating part.) A hundred years ago, two thousand calories was a snack, and the cookbooks of the day reflect that.

But the men in the study were doing regulated work (walking about three miles a day, and so on). They weren't living a strenuous lifestyle, even by modern standards.

I tend to think, however, that long-term calorie restriction is not psychologically healthy, and that modern people people don't get anything like enough exercise.



[fidelioscabinet](#)

[April 22 2009, 15:10:35 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I know plenty of people for whom "walking three miles a day"--just in terms of the walking you do in house, at work, and so on--is more than they do. People who are not, in fact, suffering from a medical condition that would be expected to limit your mobility. Terrifying, really.

Every sensible and sane writer I've read on the topic agrees that long-term restriction screws with your head in a big way and we have to remember the brain needs fat and cholesterol to work properly in the first place. When you read Solzhenitsyn and other camp {for an dreadful range of possible values of "camp") survivors' accounts, there are a lot of mental issues, and not just the slow and stupid, and the food obsessions, you'd expect.

Then there's the dreaded reset thing, where your metabolism adjusts to "dieting" levels of reduced calories, and people end up needing fewer calories because they've screwed up their metabolic rates, because they didn't add exertion but cut calories drastically instead.

One of the interesting points the doctors mentioned when my father was dying from his brain tumor was that pronounced lack of exercise resulted in reduced levels of what they called growth hormone (it's got a proper medical name, I know, but what that is--??), which in turn resulted in a strong tendency to depression, because this apparently borks up serotonin levels, among other things. I think nutrition levels also have an effect on the growth hormone levels, but I haven't got the time just now to go and thrash through the available information.



[standuponit](#)

[April 22 2009, 16:01:14 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

"I know plenty of people for whom "walking three miles a day"--just in terms of the walking you do in house, at work, and so on--is more than they do. People who are not, in fact, suffering from a medical

condition that would be expected to limit your mobility. Terrifying, really.”

This is one place where my workplace's draconian PT requirement comes in handy. Leaping tall buildings in a single bound, all part of the job description.

Is *that* what causes the serotonin drop? Huh. How interesting. I sense another research project....



 [fidelioscabinet](#)


[April 22 2009, 16:22:29 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

It's certainly not the only thing that can cause serotonin to drop, but it was mentioned as an Important Factor. I mean, growth hormone has a lot of functions besides making small people grow to become bigger ones, at least before the long bones fuse into their final length.

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 [standuponit](#)

[April 22 2009, 15:57:35 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah. I've been reading a lot of diet blogs lately, as a sort of informal research project, and the crazy out there saturates the ground water.

But good, real food and running and jumping and climbing on things seem to help my mood stability a lot.

 [tylik](#)

[April 22 2009, 15:28:30 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)


Fascinating.

I'm definitely of the opinion that the still too common medical advice around dieting is blatantly and horribly unhealthy, and have pitched a few fits to that extent. (I'm the only one of my siblings who hasn't ever had an eating disorder - having a doctor *who knows the family history* tell me that I should diet, and furthermore doing so in a stupid and uninformed way - Slim Fast, if you'd believe it - is putting me at risk. Well, okay, it's not, but only because I'm an ornery bastard, and if my mom never succeeded in talking me into an eating disorder a kind but confused MD with insecurities about his own weight just isn't going to do it. But the principle still holds.) Not only does the advice suck in terms of physical health, it's just plain toxic in terms of mental health.

(No one does this anymore. First as soon as I got into biochemistry I apparently triggered horrible flashbacks for them whenever I started asking for detailed pathway information. And the few who actually liked biochem I got along with... Then people started understanding my training regiment, and while I'm not sure if they decided that with that kind of time and intensity they just weren't going to poke at me, or if they were intimidated by the martial arts - which would be lame - they did kind of shut up about it. And then when I finally got the pain levels somewhat under control the excess weight kind of went away. Heh. And the muscles show better.)

wistful sigh I am reminded how much I enjoy issues of metabolism. Maybe after I finish up this degree. (Don't get me wrong, neuro is pretty awesome.) Because while the pathologizing of any but a narrow rang of body

types is cracked, we are also seeing a pretty major increase in a lot of metabolic disorders and... well, there are a lot of studies I'd like to run.

 [standup on it](#)

[April 22 2009, 16:06:00 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

... I'd like to read those studies you'd like to run.

 [tylik](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:21:51 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

There's so much out there that's suggestive. I mean, everyone knows about playing with their GLUT4 receptors, but I suspect that the role exercise plays in regulation of metabolism goes much, much further than that. (Personally, if I don't work out, I'm prone towards hypoglycemia. Of course, if I am in a lot of pain, or don't sleep, same thing, and they stack...) From an evolutionary standpoint one could just work on the assumption that selective pressure was applied in environments where everyone was pretty much active, and a lot of regulatory measures just break in that absence. (I posted about a cute little study a bit ago that basically implied that ghrelin might actually help stress response as well as making you hungry. Which throughout most of human history - of course, this was in mice - would have been fine. Life is hard, but I'm happy and hungry. Mm-mm.) But I also don't think that's even half the story.

And sleep is clearly huge. (Says the chronic insomniac. Hey, I've gotten a lot better.) Huger than huge. And the amount of sleep people need to function optimally is probably rather higher than generally acknowledged. Yes, I know there are those under eight hours and longevity studies, but I really think they're missing other correlations - like that people who can do well on that amount of sleep tend to be people who are under less physical stress generally, fr'instance. Meanwhile, the drops in cognitive function, even on a steady diet of seven hours a night, are just scary. Especially to this second (nth?) career grad student.

And that's before we get to how heavily we've been hacking our own environment.



 [standup on it](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:43:17 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

And if you weren't active or eating enough, it was because you were experiencing famine or sick or injured or snowed in, and depression (and depressed metabolism) are actually adaptive under those circumstances.


Lie quiet and wait for the bad thing to pass.

 [tylik](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:49:38 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah, but cortisol generally decreases a lot of your immune response, at least over the long term. (IIRC - was discussing this with my roommate/labmate recently, but haven't been following the primary literature as closely as I'd like...) Hey, life sucks, let's be more susceptible to disease! (Yes, if famine is the biggest threat the decreased metabolic load might even make it make sense. But. Do not want.)



 [standuponit](#)

[April 22 2009, 22:02:25 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Or, you know, the weak ones die off, and lower the load on the rest of the species.

Hard to see how that would evolve, though--you'd think it would be noncompetitive.

OTOH, all sorts of systems start failing under stress, and I'm pretty sure serial killers are generally maladaptive too. Not everything we do, we do because it's good for our reproductive success.

 [tylik](#)

[April 22 2009, 22:25:05 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Did I mention that I am partial to civilization? Even with its own sets of problems... (Is there enough data to look at serial killers on an evolutionary basis? Um, of course, evolutionary psych tends to annoy me more often than not.)

 [jennygadget](#)

[April 22 2009, 22:17:49 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

"And sleep is clearly huge."

I've been trying to eat better (and by that I mean healthier, fresher stuff - not necessarily less) and exercise more.

Which means also trying to do all this on a regular basis - cuz otherwise it doesn't get done.

Which is really hard when your schedule isn't regular. Especially because that means *sleep* isn't regular. It's really hard to get my body on a regular pattern of "eat at this time, sleep at this time, exercise at this time" when sometimes work cuts into the sleep and eat parts. And it's the exercise that tends to get skipped over because everything else is switched around. grrrr. I *like* those endorphins.

I end up taking short naps a lot. Especially right after I finally manage to get some decent exercise.

 [tylik](#)

[April 23 2009, 17:25:10 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I have no talent for sleeping, so sleep is the thing I schedule the most tightly. (I've only recently gotten to the point where I can take naps - if I have a room to myself with a door. I envy the students who can sleep in the library.)

After that, exercise. Which still surprises me - I was actually pretty active, in retrospect, but "not a jock" was a big part of my self image - but I pretty strongly believe that if I don't work out for 2-3 hours ever day my spine will attempt to fall off and my body will generally cease to function. (And if I work out I sleep better, and everything works better. But mostly this is fallout from a spine injury that left me without a lot of the ligaments on one side of my spine.)

Otherwise... I'm a grad student. I don't really have a life, and if I wasn't rabid about defending my training time, research would eat that too. (And my advisor has seen me push things to far and land in the hospital, which is embarrassing but does temper the pressure a bit.)

L



[jennygadget](#)

[April 23 2009, 18:24:42 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Sleep is not something I'm good at either - until I'm to the point where I crash. Most of my naps aren't real naps - unless I've just tried hiking up a really big hill - they are more like the "quiet time" my sister makes her kids do. But they still help.

The problem with the sleep/exercise/meals thing is more *when I end up sleeping then anything else. I work 12-9 three days a week, but then then regular 8-5 the other two days. Working out at 10pm doesn't really work unless I want to get up at 11 the next day. And I don't want to do that because I'm not a morning person and that makes getting up in time for work the other days next to impossible.*

So I try to plan to exercise in the morning most days. Plenty of time, right? Only, see earlier comment about not being a morning person. Also, going to bed early enough to get up early means less time for winding down after work.

I was doing really well back in November. But then the holidays happened and family came to sleep on my floor and I have had a hard time getting back into a routine since then.



[lynnol](#)

[April 22 2009, 17:58:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

For even more information on this, check out "Hunger: An Unnatural History" by Sharman Apt Russell. There is a detailed summary of the Minnesota Experiment in it, as well as more recent information from famines and aid efforts in Africa. The conclusion as I recall is that we know a lot less about this topic than most medical subjects.


Considering how difficult it is to get nutrition information about humans, you might want to check out the Animal Science literature. Quite a lot of work has been done to figure out just what combination of protein, carbohydrate and fat is optimal to put lean muscle on cattle and hogs. Hogs are a very good model for human nutrition. I used to work in a veterinary research lab, using pigs as a model for a human muscle disease.

If you go to the older literature, you may also find out how to alter the balance between fat and muscle. Back in the 1940s, lard was as valuable a product as pork. Over the next 50 years, hog producers used a combination of genetics and management to change the figure of the perfect pig. A 1940s pig carried a lot of fat, both subcutaneous and internal. A 1990s pig had better muscleing and much less fat. This has absolutely nothing to do with exercise because modern pigs are raised in confinement, aside from a few lucky animals on organic farms.

Once you figure out the basic nutrient requirements, there is a nifty tool called 'linear programming' that you can use to figure out what combination of actual food supplies will meet those requirements at a minimum

cost. Probably not the goal in your case, but you can set up the program to optimize whatever you want.



 [standuponit](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:58:37 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Nifty. Thank you! (My problem is getting *enough* calories. I'd like a *little* body fat. It's useful stuff. Padding, insulation, helps you float.)



 [lynnal](#)

[April 23 2009, 20:25:54 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Nods. I see your point. You might use the same tools to ensure that you get the minimum for water-soluble vitamins, no more than the target amount for proteins and fat-soluble vitamins, and maximizing Total Digestible Energy.

You mentioned the other day that you are being careful of how much fat you eat. I understand that you have to be careful in general, but why fat? Fats are the most concentrated source of calories. You can't turn them into glycogen for quick use while climbing, but your brain can run by burning fat just fine. Hopefully yours, I know YMMV.

On an aside, it just bugs me when nutrition sites talk about cholesterol when they actually are referring to non-sterol lipids. Or saying that cholesterol is bad for a person. We can make cholesterol from scratch (molecules of 3 carbons or less, as my organic prof would say), and do if living on a vegetarian diet. If a person has too much cholesterol, that is a metabolic problem, not a diet problem. Balancing input and output is the usual problem with fat consumption.



 [standuponit](#)

[April 23 2009, 21:19:45 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Thanks. I'm working with a nutritionist, actually.

Fats are a lovely concentrated source of calories, and I use olive oil and avocados and so forth liberally.



 [standuponit](#)

[April 27 2009, 12:18:05 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Re: the Russell book. I forgot to mention that I read it last November, and I have mixed emotions about it. It's a little too... middle-class for me to be really comfortable with it? I have a hard time *mus*ing about hunger.

But the writing is spectacular, and it told me some things I didn't know. Interesting also that some of her information on the Minnesota study contradicts Todd Tucker's book, *The Great Starvation Experiment*. Although despite the fact that Tucker's book is more in-depth, focusing only on the study--and Dr. Keys--Russell seems to have *more* details about some of the patient reactions.

Anyway, they're interesting to read in counterpoint.

And I was very interested in Russell's comments on refeeding centers and the technical problems of famine relief. I need to do more reading on that issue.


 [intelligentrix](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:08:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Hmmm... I have been on what some might consider a severe calorie restriction for about 9 months now. I've been averaging 1016 calories a day. However, I am not always hungry and not food obsessed and not drinking a ton of water to appease hunger. I eat 4 to 5 times a day and balance my diet well with plenty of raw fruits and veggies, whole grains, a minimum of animal protein, and very few processed foods. I've lost a little over 60 pounds so far.


The downside, as far as I can tell: my body is adjusting to the lower calorie count and the weight loss is slowing down. I have a sedentary job but I'm trying to make time to take little walks during the day and I'm looking into a gym membership. But I don't think I'm crazy or sick.

Just another YMMV example, I suppose. I have always had a very efficient metabolism.

 [standuponit](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:49:03 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It also depends on your size. If you're not exercising, and you're a smaller person without too much muscle mass, you need a lot fewer calories. It's actually normal for weight loss to slow down as you lose weight: you're not undercutting your metabolic need by as much, because smaller people need fewer calories. (Also, if you haven't been doing strength-building exercises, you lose muscle as well as fat, and muscle has a higher metabolic load.) So it's not that you're necessarily "adjusting," it's more that you don't need as many calories to maintain your body weight. (A pound of weight loss is approximately equivalent to a deficit of 3500 calories, according to my nutritionist.)

 [jennygadget](#)

[April 22 2009, 22:40:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

yup

I found this out by accident years ago when my dad was counting calories to lose weight (doctor prescribed, and included exercise and stuff for his heart and cholesterol). Since he had managed to lose A LOT of weight doing that, I got it into my head to do the same. So, I added up all my calories for a day or two to see how they measured up....and realized that I was already taking in not much more than he was (possibly less, I don't really remember, it was a while ago).


At which point I looked at his extra foot (?) of height and all the exercising he did and was all "duh."

The counting calories helped - but more because it meant I was paying attention to *what* I was eating than because I was paying attention to *how much* I was eating.

 [intelligentrix](#)

Well, I'm not a small person. I'm 5'7" tall and when I started this whole thing I weighed 260 pounds. I'm planning to re-evaluate how I feel when I hit 180. I suspect I'll be pretty happy at that weight. (The icon is me at about age 30 and 200lbs. My waist is a bit thicker these days.)

As far as muscle mass is concerned, I'm probably about normal. I've always been pretty strong, though I'm not doing any kind of strength exercises. I do spend a couple of days a week mostly on my feet. But, yeah, maintaining muscle mass is one reason I want to join a gym.

 standuponit

April 23 2009, 12:07:11 UTC Edited: April 23 2009, 12:08:48 UTC COLLAPSE

I hope you don't mind if I ogle your icon. (The phrase "heroic figure of a woman" springs to mind for some reason.)

Okay. (By my standards, um, 5'7" is a small person. Egocentrism. I suck. *Tries to look winning*)

So say your basal metabolic rate when you weighed 260 was around 2000 calories a day. (That's what you burn if you sleep all day, basically. Mine's about 4500, but I'm a freak of nature: my metabolic load runs around triple baseline.) You say you have a fairly sedentary lifestyle, so we'll say that at 260 pounds, you probably burned around 2300 kilocalories a day just existing. (More on the days you spend on your feet--and don't underestimate the caloric load of just working standing up and walking around. Fighting gravity is huge.)

Subtract what you eat--1000 calories a day--from what you burn--2300 calories a day--and you have 1300 calories a day that has to come out of the granaries! Voila! which means, give or take, about two and a half pounds of weight loss a week.

Except when you weigh 200 pounds, your BMR drops to somewhere around 1675 kilocalories a day. Which means, oh, okay, now you are probably burning maybe 1900 calories just existing, so your deficit is 900 calories, so--

So if you've lost 60 pounds in six months, that's averaging out to a daily caloric deficit of around 1130 calories a day, which--within broad tolerances--means your metabolism functions perfectly! It's a champ! You're textbook!

You probably *have* lost some muscle mass. People who are under calorie restriction do. (I've got personal experience on this one. :-P) It's adaptive: muscle burns a heck of a lot more energy than fat does, so one thing your body does to protect itself in times of famine is get rid of some of that muscle, turn it into fuel.

Thing is, most people can't sustain a 50% calorie deficit for that long, or remain healthy doing it. You also rock on that front, and it probably has a lot to do with food choices, as it sounds like everything you're eating is whole grain/fruits and veggies, which stabilizes blood sugar levels like whoa and makes a big difference in the whole mood swings/tiredness thing. (Me, I don't always notice I'm hungry, because my sensitivity to my own blood sugar levels is a mess, which makes it really easy for

me to keel over and/or drop weight without intending to. I do, in fact, just forget to eat.)

...I just got metabolism geek all over you, didn't I? I'm sorry. I've gotten really interested lately in hacking my own metabolism (I'm trying to gain muscle and a nice warm bouyant layer of subcutaneous fat--I'm aiming for about seven percent, maybe as high as ten!--and do it without loading up on animal protein, which is exactly as hard as it sounds) and it's made me *totally boring*, like any kid with a new toy.



[jennygadget](#)

[April 23 2009, 18:08:59 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

"By my standards, um, 5'7" is a small person."

lol

so what would that make my 5'1"? :D

"Me, I don't always notice I'm hungry, because my sensitivity to my own blood sugar levels is a mess, which makes it really easy for me to keel over and/or drop weight without intending to. I do, in fact, just forget to eat."

I'm guessing I don't have nearly as big of a problem with this as you do, so I apologize if I'm being all 'me too!' in that annoying way people sometimes do when they only have the vaguest idea of what you are talking about...but yeah, I forget to eat sometimes too. Since my body doesn't so much tell me that I'm hungry as it tells me "now is when you usually eat" that means I sometimes forget to eat if my meals aren't scheduled at the same time every day. Sometimes my body doesn't even bother to tell me I'm hungry - provided everything around me is interesting enough.

luckily for me, I do not keel over when that happens. I just get really bad headaches and/or excessively crabby. And then grab the closest and easiest thing to eat - which usually isn't very healthy. Especially since the being way past hungry part means that I eat lots of the bad stuff, leaving less room for the good stuff later.


I am comforted by the fact that it's not ME, it's genetic. My mother and I are a disaster traveling together because we *both* want to just keep going and see all the fun stuff. And no, I'm not hungry yet, are you? Then lets wait and eat at that cool sounding place over by X...and nevermind that we likely won't get there for hours.

"and it's made me totally boring, like any kid with a new toy."

1) I find kids with new toys fascinating to watch. But then I'm odd: I also like reading them Mo Willems stories over and over again.

2) I'm fairly certain we are all geeking out *with* you. Thus, us being here in the first place. ;)



 [inaurolillium](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:16:24 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I think this might be one of the studies I read about in a book called Rethinking Thin. IIRC, in the starvation study she talked about, the subjects not only experienced a drop in libido, they also stared poring over recipes and pictures of food as if they were porn.

I have a lot of emotional background around food and dieting, and I'm tempted to talk about it, but it's an awful lot of stuff, and if I open that box, you'll end up with a great huge rant about it in your comments, and I'm not sure I want to do that.

Suffice it to say that discovering that eating five times a day is the only thing that causes an appreciable drop in my weight. I can increase the drop a little by exercising, but exercising alone *will not* promote any weight loss at all -- if I'm not eating enough, my body decides I'm starving AND increasing my activity, so now I have a huge calorie deficit, so it will hold on to as much as it can, and I just wind up having no energy the rest of the time, and getting depressed. (Seriously. I've tried it. People keep telling me I'm wrong about this, that increasing my activity level is the only way to speed up my metabolism, and the way I should be losing weight. It *does not work* for me.) The only thing that works significantly is eating small amounts frequently, and making sure they're all real food. Anything else, and I either maintain my current weight, or gain weight. The worst weight gains of my life are all when I was eating once or twice a day.

It makes me *completely crazy* that people (like my father) disbelieve this *even though it works*.

See? Long rant. And that without opening the huge box of craziness that is my family's attitudes towards food and dieting.

 [tylik](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:32:56 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

sigh If you want to have a nice quiet bitch about the families session sometime, do drop me a note. (And, y'know, we could use my journal so as not to harass our host...)

Do you know what kind of blood sugar fluctuations you get? Eating frequently is something that works for a lot of people, but... okay, even if I had the right equipment you probably wouldn't want me trying to take (small amounts of) blood several times a day. But it would be interesting to track your insulin/glucagon balance, and blood glucose, and cortisol, and...



 [inaurolillium](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:39:41 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I have, at various points in my life, verged on hypoglycemia, although I have never had a hard diagnosis of it. But that's as much as I know. I've spent a good amount of time simply learning to recognize when I'm hungry, and how to tell what my body wants to eat (as opposed to my pleasure centers, or whichever bit it is that wants the sugar), and I'm still not very good at actually doing it consistently.

While it would be really neat to know the actual details of my metabolism, I have a phobia of needles, and have been known to faint from fingersticks. So no, I really wouldn't care for having blood drawn multiple times a day.

But I'll come have that bitch session sometime. Argh.

 [tylik](#)

April 22 2009, 21:56:49 UTC COLLAPSE

I went through a nifty bit in my teens where I'd get the serious mood swings and then just kind of collapse. (Dear gods, how does anyone survive being a teen? And I was a pretty responsible one.) I took some pretty drastic measures with my diet (like cutting out all refined sugars and most processed food for a couple of years - oh, and eating every 3 waking hours) which helped a lot, and these days as long as I train and sleep and eat decently it's not an issue. Most of the time I don't even have to be especially careful.

Yeah, stop by. Maybe I can rant about the scary meth addiction bit I ran into yesterday while we're at it.



 [inaurolillium](#)


April 22 2009, 22:16:44 UTC COLLAPSE

Interestingly, some of my issues center around refined sugar in a way that makes it almost psychologically impossible to cut out refined sugar for more than short periods without triggering an entire 'nother round of crazy inside my head. Cut way back on them, yes; make a conscious decision to get rid of them, no. I know, it's ridiculous, but it's pretty deep-seated. I'll be 'round late tonight to give you the whole story. It's gonna be an interesting day, full of hospital visits and counselor appointments, and it won't be over til 10:30 or later.

 [tylik](#)

April 22 2009, 23:00:32 UTC COLLAPSE

I look forward to it. Though if you don't know - I'll probably be up for at most another two hours. I'm on East Coast time. And I get up around four on Thursdays or I don't get yoga + math + sparring + forms in. (But then K probably has a sprained finger, so it might be a no sparring day anyway... Boy I'm going to feel bad if it's broken. I mean, technically he had more control of that grab than did I, but I was holding his hand while throwing myself to the floor at the time. *He* was holding my leg.)

 [standuponit](#)

April 22 2009, 21:51:26 UTC COLLAPSE

Yeah, that's the study. It hasn't been repeated, for humanitarian reasons.

I think we've all got a pile of crazy about food issues. If we didn't, who would keep the agro-processing industries lurching along?



 [inaurolillium](#)

April 22 2009, 22:17:51 UTC COLLAPSE

Very true. I think our society needs a food counselor.




 [standuponit](#)

April 23 2009, 12:33:48 UTC COLLAPSE

Indubitably.



 [hawkwing_lb](#)

[April 22 2009, 21:50:41 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)


Huh. This study, it is very interesting.

My body shape hasn't changed much since I was fifteen. (Which is, of course, all of eight years, but still.) I'm heavier now, but how much of that is muscle from having started climbing two and three times a week, I can't say.

I figure my daily calorie intake is closer to 3,000 (at least on a climbing day) than 1,800-2,000 - which, I am given to understand by the so-called 'experts', is the recommended daily intake for a poor delicate female. On the days when I don't get decently fed, I get angrier, tired, and make more stupid mistakes - and it's really noticeable. I also need more sleep.

(I could wish I did not get quite so much of my nutrition from cereal, muffins and chocolate bars, but home cooking is for the likes of people who actually like to cook. Me, I do pasta all right, and chicken with vegetables at the weekends, and that's my limit. :P)

So, yeah, really interesting. Particularly in contrast to the stupid misinformation about diet that's out there.

 [standuponit](#)


[April 22 2009, 21:56:51 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Guesstimating from what I watch my female climbing buddies eat, I'd say that 3K to maintain weight is pretty typical for a climbergrrl of 5'7" or so.

I think their average woman is probably around 5.4 and lightly built.



 [hawkwing_lb](#)

[April 22 2009, 22:03:51 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Very light built. And she wouldn't want to be trying to build or maintain much in the way of muscle.

(My bitching about the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which women are socially discouraged from building or maintaining upper-body muscle probably belongs in a different venue, so I'll restrain myself.)

Also, love the icon.

[Can I carry that up the stairs for you?](#)

 [standuponit](#)

[April 22 2009, 22:15:03 UTC](#)


[COLLAPSE](#)

Bitch away. I know there are some women around here who would love to help. And one of them can run up a flight of stairs with a rescue dummy.

(Somebody I kinda work with started in about the First Lady's arms the other day. I maybe enjoyed pointing out that I think they're *hot*.)



Re: Can I carry that up the stairs for you?

 **hawkwing_1b**

April 22 2009, 22:22:46 UTC COLLAPSE

Upper body muscle looks good on everyone. That's all I'm saying. :)

At least climbers get that. Other people, not always. (Not even the fitness instructors in gyms who one sometimes kinda sorta needs to give one pointers on how to go about building that muscle.)

bitches

Anyway.



Re: Can I carry that up the stairs for you?

 **magpie49**

April 23 2009, 05:15:59 UTC COLLAPSE

I like upper body muscle on people. I just don't get how models with stick thin arms are ideal.

Way back in my checkered past when I was working at an upholstery shop, I weighed 156. My tasks included helping the boss wrestle furniture out of customer's homes first into the van, then into the shop, then back out in the reverse order. At 5' 5" I was pretty fit. I had a doctor then who kept telling me I needed to weight 125. It made me angry.

Somewhere in this time frame, I went to the fair with friends, and we came upon a Weight Guessing booth. You paid, he guessed, you sat in the hanging scale seat. Moment of truth. If he was off by 6 pounds or more then you won a prize. Friends pushed me up to the line, and paid for me. They had already picked out what prize they wanted. The guy was low by 15 pounds.

I'm not that active nor that fit now. I weigh quite a bit more. I thought I was fat back then. I *know* I'm fat now. I like myself quite a bit more now than I did then.

I'm looking forward to doing a lot more walking as the weather warms up. It would be nice to build muscle mass, and reacquire more flexibility without risking any bones. We'll see what happens.



Re: Can I carry that up the stairs for you?

 **standuponit**

April 23 2009, 12:23:01 UTC COLLAPSE

The U.S. Navy says the weight standard for a 65-inch female is 160 pounds. The Army says that the weight standard for a 65-inch female in her mid-twenties who has completed basic training is between 114 and 152 pounds.

(My own agency sets the weight standards for a female your height at 111-156 pounds. One of my coworkers, who's a hair under 5'8", always has to body-fat-percentage-test out of it, because she's a brick of solid muscle and weighs more than I do.

Incidentally, for a male my height the standard is 169-231. This year is the first year I haven't eaten a breakfast the size of Pakistan and worn my lead-lined undies when I went for my assessment. I'm up to a whopping 175 pounds!)

Anyway, I figure they probably have a reasonable clue what a fit, muscular woman weighs in at--though even then, all the services have the body-fat test option, because they *know* muscular people weigh more. And there are *still* (valid) complaints that the standards for women are set too low, and that they act as a glass ceiling.

In short, your doctor's weight standards for women were whack. That's a technical term.

L

Re: Can I carry that up the stairs for you?

 [tylik](#)

April 23 2009, 17:16:53 UTC COLLAPSE

But were they whack wearing two inch heels?


Okay, so I guess I still haven't completely calmed down about that all. But I spent my late teens with doctors telling me that I needed to lose about thirty pounds... only to find out that I was around 17% body fat. I spent several weeks wanting to wander into doctor's offices and set those height-weight charts on fire.

There was also a time when I stopped urgent care with a knee injury (I'd done a floor routine without warming up) and the doctor, without looking at me, said I hurt my knee because I was overweight. I was still wearing my dance dance duds, so I pulled off my smock and invited him to show me where the extra weight was.

Oy. Excuse the ranty.

L

Re: Can I carry that up the stairs for you?

 [jennygadget](#)

April 23 2009, 18:43:22 UTC COLLAPSE

Ack! I never had to go through anything that bad. But I do remember getting into arguments with various adult male authority figures back in HS re: the idiocy of BMI.

My points generally being: You do know I play soccer*, right? And that there is muscle underneath this fat? Also, how about you carry my breasts around on *your* chest for a couple of days and *then* tell me how much you think they add to my weight.

I also thought the stupid fat percentage thing with the calipers that they made you do in gym class was excessively stupid too. (sorry did I repeat myself? then let me say it again: stupid stupid stupid.) If for no other reason than because I had no idea wtf I was doing, so how could it be accurate?

*and bc I always feel the need to clarify this, whether it's relevant or not. While I only played JV soccer, I played JV soccer in *Redlands*. Home to both Landon Donavon and

Heather Aldama. Back when there was only one HS and therefore one girls JV team to try out for. the various male authority figures I was arguing with had a tendency to dismiss my fitness bc I only played AYSO and JV. not club and/or Varsity. and they all knew this bc it's *Redlands* and so, for example, my doctor was also the father of one of my former teammates. so they tended to downplay how fit I really was. which made me want to smash things. and ended up having the opposite affect as desired since, of course, how in the hell was I supposed to compete with Heather Aldama? (and I mean that literally: Heather was only two years behind me in school.)

Re: Can I carry that up the stairs for you?

 **magpie49**

April 23 2009, 18:41:22 UTC COLLAPSE

What sensible weight standards! (at least compared to those of the doctor's whack standards, many thanks for the technical term) I would have fit right in.

I neglected to mention in the previous post, possibly because my whole post went away and I had to write it again from go, that the icon is me at age 35, and 154 pounds. A friend photoshopped my image onto the surf board. I don't surf.

Congratulations on the weight gain.

If the technology comes to support fat transplants, I could consider being a donor nowadays. Back in high school I could have used one myself. I have a very clear memory of part of a test for a Red Cross Swimming level card: Float for five minutes. While practicing for the test with a lung full of air, I ended up gazing at the air/water interface about a foot above my nose. I looked toward my feet, and could see the bottom of the pool, my legs slanted down at such an angle. I don't quite remember how I passed, but I did. I think asked if I could scull to keep my face up, and the answer was "No, but if you can maintain your natural float level for five minutes we'll count it." Not a problem. When we did the Life Saving Class, I got to be the 'victim unconscious on the bottom of the pool' an inordinate number of times because I didn't have to put on a weight belt, or work to stay on the bottom, just let out about half my air.

I would suppose you don't float, either.



 **phiremangston**


April 23 2009, 17:07:24 UTC COLLAPSE

Good heavens.

If 1600 to 1800 calories a day is starvation...well. Let's just say one of my old roommates used to eat 1200 calories *at most*, and she exercised obsessively.


Needless to say, there was a detrimental effect on not only her, but everyone who's lived with her.



 [inauroliillium](#)

[April 23 2009, 21:36:39 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


Totally offtopic: Look! [Twitter recipes!](#)

 [jennygadget](#)

[April 24 2009, 00:20:27 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

food is off-topic? since when? :)




 [standuponit](#)

[April 27 2009, 11:59:51 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Genius!



 [jennygadget](#)

[April 27 2009, 05:07:28 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


"What do we learn? We learn that being hungry makes you crazy and sick."

(trigger warnings for the post apply to this comment as well)

I just finished *Wintergirls* by Laurie Halse Anderson yesterday. Lia, the protagonist, attempts to eat no more than **800** calories a day. Even more frighteningly, she seems to manage it most days. (Since the author talked to doctors that treat patients with anorexia and other eating disorders - and asked at least one to review her manuscript - I'm assuming that number reflects reality, although it's obviously far from realistic in terms of staying alive.)

Needless to say Lia is very not well in both body and mind - to the point of losing hair and having hallucinations. The latter makes for some interesting imagery and fantasy elements in the book, but it's very scary to think about when it comes to the people actually going through this.

Stories like this makes me feel so sad and useless at the same time. I suppose, at the very least, being more knowledgeable about the topic is a Good Thing.

 [standuponit](#)


[April 27 2009, 12:10:25 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You aren't kidding about the triggery.

I've heard of cases where young people restricted calories even more stringently than that.

No, Lia wouldn't be very well, doing that to herself. Jesus fuck, how horrible.



 [jennygadget](#)

[April 27 2009, 16:25:50 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Well, *Lia*, at least does survive. The book ends with the implication that she is getting better - and most importantly, finally *wants to* live. It won't be easy for her, but she sounds very determined.

It was interesting hearing the author talk about [i]why[/i] she wrote the book, though. (I went to a book festival this weekend. \o/) Her first YA book was [i]Speak[/i] (about sexual assault and the silence that tends to surround it) and she still gets tons of letters/emails/ljcomments every year from kids telling her how much that book means to them. Even tough boy jocks that didn't think they would ever relate to Melinda in [i]Speak[/i] but have secrets of their own. She's also gotten a lot of requests over the years from readers asking her to write a story about eating disorders. So the hope is that the book will reach out to teens that are going through what Lia went through and maybe help them through it and know that they are not alone. And also educate all teens on what the dangers really are and what some of their peers may be having to deal with.

Apologies for the spoilers - it sounded like you could stand to hear the good news, and well, I'm guessing that you really read much YA fic in any case. ;)



[electricchicken](#)

[April 27 2009, 23:53:19 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Actually, out here in Ireland random bags of crisps you buy at Marks and Spencer (assuming you can't stand the taste of regular ones and decide to buy that baked variety, which apparently is only for dieters) tell you that if you're trying to lose weight it's best to eat less than 1500 calories per day. With exercise.

Something about that message placement always seems wrong to me. If only I could figure out what...



[inaurolillium](#)

[May 3 2009, 04:40:44 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Hey, have you seen [this](#)? A stick-on device the size of a band-aid that calculates caloric intake and expenditure. Maybe it'll have an alarm that you can set to go off to remind you to eat?

[This looks like a good idea.](#)

...

[This.](#)

...

[Little guy's not bad.](#)

Gotta teach RHex to smear.